

EARLY EDUCATION INITIATIVE GRANTS

Application for 2014-2015

What is the Early Education Initiative Grant Program?

The Early Education Initiative (EEI) grant program was established by the Vermont Legislature in 1987 to provide early education opportunities for *three- and four-year-olds who are at-risk*. The provisions of this state funded grant program include: (1) prioritizing areas in the state with few opportunities for early education, (2) providing children developmentally appropriate, experiential learning opportunities in group and/or home settings, (3) valuing parent involvement and input, and (4) developing programs that result from collaborations between school districts and community organizations. The EEI grant is a **one-year grant** awarded through a competitive process; the range for EEI grants is \$10,000 to \$30,000. *Funding is contingent upon legislative approval.*

What is the definition of “at-risk” children?

Children who are considered to be “at-risk” include children who:

- Are developmentally delayed by at least 25% of their chronological age in one or more of the five developmental domains (such as language, socio-emotional development), but who are not eligible for Essential Early Education (EEE) services,
- Are from non-English speaking families or are dual language learners (i.e., English Language Learners),
- Are economically disadvantaged (at or below 185% of federal poverty guidelines),
- Have a history of abuse, neglect, or family violence,
- Are homeless or in a family that has unstable housing, or
- Are socially isolated.

What is the intent of an EEI grant?

The major purpose of the EEI grant is to provide young at-risk children and their families with an opportunity to participate in quality early education opportunities. The top priority is to serve children who do not have any access to an early learning and development program. These children may live in towns that do not offer publicly funded prekindergarten or in towns where there are limits due to capacity/resources, or who are three-year-olds in towns that opt to offer universal prekindergarten education only to four-year-olds. Applications that propose providing specific services to at-risk children and their families so that they may successfully participate in existing publicly funded prekindergarten programs are acceptable, but considered a much lower priority.

Who can apply for an EEI grant?

Community child care centers and preschools, registered family providers, school districts, supervisory unions, tax exempt organizations serving children and families, and public agencies such as Head Start and parent-child centers may be the lead organization and/or fiscal agent for EEI grants.

However, all proposals **must be collaborative** and developed by representatives from at least one school district (or supervisory union) and one community program.

How to apply for an EEI grant?

First, it is important for all prospective applicants to engage in discussions with individuals, schools, organizations and agencies that provide or support early learning and development programs within the community. These discussions will help identify how the community could best utilize EEI funds to ensure all children who are at-risk have access to quality early education opportunities.

Step 1: Notify us of your intent to apply. Simply email Shirley Rawson at shirley.rawson@state.vt.us with the following information no later than **April 8, 2014**:

- Name of Applicant and Fiscal Agent
- Contact Person (name, title, phone number, and email address)

Step 2: Submit the EEI Grant Proposal which consists of a Proposal Narrative and Budget no later than **May 16, 2014**.

CAREFULLY READ AND FOLLOW THE APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Applications that do not follow the guidelines and use the budget form will be returned unread.

EEI Grant Proposal includes:

Completed Cover Page form

- Complete the attached form

Proposal Narrative

- Must **not exceed three (3) pages**
- Follow the "Outline for the Proposal Narrative" (refer to page 3)
- Be certain to answer the questions posed in the Narrative Guidelines.
- Include a footer with the lead organization's name and page numbers

Completed Budget form

- Use the attached Excel spreadsheet
- Be certain to include all Other Funding Sources that support the proposed activities

Submitting EEI Grant Proposals:

- EEI Proposal Cover Pages & Narratives must be submitted as PDF files; Budgets should be submitted as Excel files
- Email the full proposal to Shirley Rawson at shirley.rawson@state.vt.us
- Deadline for all proposals is **May 16, 2014**.

What feedback will be provided on your proposal?

All proposal contact persons will be notified by mid-June as to whether they will be funded and, if funded, the amount of the grant. Reviewers' feedback will be structured into three broad areas:

Strengths, Areas Needing Improvement, and Questions on the proposal. The reviewers' questions will be emailed to the proposal's contact person before a decision regarding funding is made.

Is any technical assistance available?

Yes, technical assistance on the EEI application will be available in early April. Keep on the lookout for information about an EEI Virtual Technical Assistance session.

If you have any questions, contact Shirley Rawson via email: shirley.rawson@state.vt.us.

**See the following page for the Outline for the Proposal Narrative*

OUTLINE FOR THE PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Format:

- The line spacing of the narrative must be either 1.5 or 2.0
- Use 12 point font and 1" margins
- Include a "footer" with the applicant name (left) and consecutive page numbers (right).
- Label each section using the same titles used in this outline.
- The entire narrative must **not exceed three (3) pages**

Narrative:

Introduction

Briefly describe your organization, your partners, and the geographic areas your grant would serve. How many children and in which at-risk categories does your grant propose serving?

Need for an EEI Grant

Why is this EEI grant needed? What information shows that at-risk children in your community do not have adequate access or opportunity for quality early educational experiences? What data indicate that the activities proposed in your grant proposal are necessary? This is the section in which you should present as strong a case as possible as to why this grant should be supported.

Description of Proposed Program or Activities

What are the **goals** your proposed grant seeks to accomplish? The goals should relate to the needs described in the section above.

Specify the **activities** that would be supported with EEI funds. (Be certain the activities are connected to the goals you've identified.) How will you ensure that the Vermont Early Learning Standards are used? How will you make certain that at-risk children are in inclusive environments and have opportunities to play and learn with their peers? How will you ensure that the program or activities provided are high quality?

How will the progress of children served by your proposed program be measured? How will you measure **outcomes** and progress towards addressing the goals you've outlined? How will you evaluate the grant's effectiveness?

Family Engagement

What specific opportunities or services will be provided to families? How will this grant enable families to be engaged and to make decisions about the proposed program or activities? How will families be involved in evaluating the grant's activities?

Collaboration and Coordination

Which organizations, school districts, and/or community-based agencies have been actively involved in developing this proposal? Who are the primary partners that will oversee implementation and evaluate the grant's activities? How will this grant coordinate with other early learning and development programs in the community, so that services complement rather than supplant or compete with each other?